Course Syllabus

Church Planting and Growth (EV/WM665)

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary – Charlotte

Spring 2015

Instructor:  Dr. Mike Moses

Contact Information: 704-948-3232 x225  mmoses@lakeforest.org

Schedule: The assignments for this course will extend throughout the spring semester, from Jan 20 through May 9. The class meetings will be on

January 23-24  Friday: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m., Saturday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
February 20-21  Friday: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m., Saturday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
March 20-21  Friday: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m., Saturday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Office Hours: 4:30-5:30 p.m. after Saturday class; other per arrangement with instructor

Course Description: This course provides an introduction and systematic overview of the process of church planting and consequent congregational development and nurture. Included are biblical and theological rationales for church planting as an evangelistic strategy from a missiological and contextually sensitive perspective, as well as an introduction to specific tools, methods, and resources needed for the effective development of new congregations.

Gordon-Conwell Mission: Church Planting and Church Growth fulfills the Seminary Mission statement by allowing students to see that church planting is a vital means of evangelism for cultural engagement in our society (Article 5) and missionary expansion of the global church (Article 6).

Relation to Curriculum: The course Church Planting and Church Growth satisfies the missions and evangelism requirement for all degree programs. The course has no prerequisites. It provides a suitable introduction to both evangelism and missions for students interested in church planting as a vocation.

Course Objectives: At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate the following outcomes:

- Students should be able to present a biblical and missiological rationale for church planting as a viable methodology for evangelism and mission in the North American and global context.
Students should complete individual assessments in terms of their personality, spiritual gifts, talents, motivation, leadership style and other personal factors in light of church planting requirements and evaluate their readiness and capacity to engage in church planting work in one role or another.

Students should be able to clearly identify the major challenges and incentives for church planting and the impact these have upon the church planter.

Students should be able to develop a comprehensive church planting strategy that would address the needs of a new congregation through its various phases of inception and growth that should:

1. Develop a contextual analysis of a possible church planting site and identify what key church planting models and strategies could be optimally utilized.
2. Prepare a feasibility study of the proposed church plant identifying key factors and challenges including staffing, budget, and eliciting the initial core group.
3. Formulate a vision and mission statement for the new congregation including core values and style elements.
4. Create an intentional systematic process of congregational growth and development toward maturity.
5. Conceive an initial strategic plan for a congregational launch and subsequent congregation building activities for the first six months.

Course Requirements: Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below. The successful completion of these activities will require each student to spend approximately 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and out of class. The following chart indicates how these hours are distributed across the various course assignments. Descriptions of the assignments are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Expected Time Commitment</th>
<th>Student’s actual time on task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance</td>
<td>35 hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Assessment (50 points)</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Church Planter Interviews (75 points)</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan/Analysis (150 points)</td>
<td>25 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Readings (25 points)</td>
<td>55 hours</td>
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</tbody>
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Required Textbooks and Materials: The following are the required readings for the course. Students will be responsible for reading them and being familiar with their contents. A final statement of completion should be submitted at the end of the course to verify amount of reading completed.


**ISBN-13:** 978-1842273333


**Course Assignments:** All class work and your reading report must be submitted by May 9, 2014.

**Assignment One: Personal Assessment as Church Planter** Due Feb 22

Self-awareness is a critical part of leadership, especially being a leader in a church plant. Church planting requires a number of special competencies and qualities. This assignment provides you with the opportunity to take an honest and hard look at yourself in light of a number of categories needed for church planting. Hopefully this self-appraisal will provide you with needed insight into your ability to be a part of a church plant in some capacity, as well as greater clarity concerning current ministry roles.

The Personal Assessment Exercise will require the following steps:

1. Complete the Church Planter Profile exercise for yourself (will be provided as a handout the first weekend of class).
2. Ask two honest and trustworthy people who know you well to complete the same profile with you in mind. Make an appointment to meet with them (separately or together) to discuss your answers as compared with their appraisals. Where do they agree? Where do they differ? Why?
3. Reflect on these two steps and write up a report (5-6 pages) to submit that summarizes your personal findings regarding your assessment and how you potentially are suited for church planting work as a lead church planter, or in a different role. Include what these findings imply for any current ministry role you fulfill.

This assignment is worth 50 points. An excellent project will provide in depth and complete reflection in a candid manner on your qualifications to participate in a church plant based upon your own self-appraisal and your conversations with two other key people providing you feedback.
Assignment Two: Church Planting Interview Teams

Due Mar 22

The experience of church planting is a unique story of faith, frustration and varying degrees of fruition that indelibly mark the life of the pioneer minister and team. Wisdom gained from success and failures can provide a rich harvest of insight regarding the church planting quest.

This assignment requires that you work collaboratively with 2 or 3 other students as a research team. Each team member will be responsible for interviewing two church planters to glean perspectives from their ministries into the challenges, frustrations, and convictions of pioneering a new congregation. The interviews can be in person or over the telephone but should be done person to person. Interview data should be recorded and collected for further analysis and reflection. Your subjects should have planted at least one church. If they are currently planting a church, they should have been in the process for at least 1 year.

Team members will work together to develop an appropriate interviewing instrument to be used by each team member and a way to collect, analyze, and discuss the team data.

Steps to Take:

1. Identify two or three fellow students to work with as a team.
2. Develop a questionnaire to use in the interview process. The questionnaire should investigate the following:
   - Background information regarding the church planter that will be helpful in your analysis
   - Why did this person plant a church? Why did this person feel called or qualified to do it?
   - How did the planter take ‘mission context’ into account in specific ministry choices?
   - What were the greatest challenges the church planter faced? How did he or she respond? Where were the outcomes? How did they get encouragement?
   - What special ways did they see God’s providence at work in the planting process? How did the church planting process influence the planter spiritually?
   - What did the planter learn of him or herself as a result of this venture?
   - What would the planter do differently if things could be done over again?
   - Other issues?

3. Team members should contact two church planters and arrange for the interviews. Let the subjects know the data will be confidential if requested.
4. Data of interviews should be recorded and transcribed in a text format to share with your team members.
5. The team should analyze the data **together** by looking for themes and patterns in the responses that emerge from the interviews. Compare and contrast the experiences of the church planters. Include quotations as pertinent illustrations.

6. Each team should complete an 8-10 page paper that describes the research process, the interview questionnaire, and presents a final discussion of your findings around the theme, *The Inner World of the Church Planter*.

*Each team will submit only one report and all members will receive the same class grade. Each team should be ready to present a short summary of findings by the final class weekend.*

The grade for the project will reflect the quality of the research questionnaire developed, the strength of the data gathered and the insight and observations resulting from group analysis of the data. A total of 75 points can be earned per student.

**Assignment Three: Strategic Plan/ Analysis of Church Planting  Due May 9**

Church planters need to develop clear plans as a critical part of the church planting process. This assignment will provide an opportunity for students planning to launch a church or who are in the initial stages of a church launch to develop a comprehensive overview of the strategic plan that will address the needs of a new congregation through its various phases of inception and growth. For students who do not intend to plant a church, they can use this exercise to do an intentional and sequential analysis of a current church plant, or to simulate the strategic plan for a potential church plant. This assignment is worth up to 150 points.

**Strategic Plan**

At the conclusion of the course, students should submit a completed strategic plan for a proposed church plant (12-15 pages) that identifies the following core elements of the plan. The plan should provide support from the course’s required and extra credit readings to justify elements of the plan.

1. Formulate a rationale for your strategic plan that incorporates a biblical, theological, and missiological rationale for church planting
2. Develop a contextual analysis of a possible church planting site and identify what key church planting models and strategies could be optimally utilized.
3. Prepare a feasibility study of the proposed church plant identifying key factors and challenges including staffing, budget, and eliciting the initial core group.
4. Formulate a vision and mission statement for the new congregation including core values and style elements.
5. Create an intentional systematic process of congregational growth and development toward maturity.
6. Conceive an initial strategic plan for a congregational launch and outline subsequent church building activities for the first six months.
**Church Plant Analysis**

Students who choose to do an analysis of a current church plant (12 – 15 pages) should research the above information from sources at the church plant. The analysis should not only record the salient history and features of the church plant, but provide an evaluation commentary of the church plant that incorporates insights from required and additional course readings with suggested ways the plant could have been more effectively led and managed.

**Extra Credit Reading**

Students can receive extra credit by completing additional reading from the Bibliography listed below. Students can earn up to 10 extra points. For every 100 pages of extra reading, students can earn 2 points with a limit of 10 points for 500 pages. Students must submit their extra credit reading with their required reading report by identifying the books or articles read as well as the number of pages as well as a one page summary for each extra work read.

**Bibliography for Extra Credit**

**Websites**

[www.churchplanting.net](http://www.churchplanting.net)

This is an extensive site provided by the Southern Baptists Board of Home missions and provides significant resources that can be downloaded for free

*Omega Course: Church Planter Training Curriculum* (5 volumes, on-line).  
[http://www.alliancescp.org/resources/omegacourse.html](http://www.alliancescp.org/resources/omegacourse.html)

**Books**


Scoggins, Dick. *Handbook for House Churches*. [on-line], accessed 1 December 1999,


Towns, Elmer. *Getting a Church Started*. Church Growth Institute, Box 4404, Lynchbsurg, VA 24502, 1985


**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>270 – 300</td>
<td>A- to A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240 – 269</td>
<td>B- to B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210 – 239</td>
<td>C- to C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 – 209</td>
<td>D- to D+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Late work:** All late work will be penalized the equivalent of one letter grade per week beyond the due date, unless arrangements are made ahead of time. Extenuating circumstances will be considered as appropriate. Work turned in later than May 9 (the official end date for the spring semester) will normally require that an extension be approved by the Seminary. If you anticipate a problem, contact me as soon as possible.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are required to attend all sessions of the course. Absenteeism will result in a loss of grade points. If for reason of illness or family death or emergency, please contact Dr. Moses regarding these events to determine appropriate make-up activities. For additional information concerning attendance, consult the *Student Handbook* requirements and guidelines.
Document Formatting and Citation Style Requirements: All written assignments should be prepared in MS-Word format (no pdf files, .dat documents, or Word Perfect documents). Assignments should be double spaced with 1” margins on all sides of each page, and should be printed in Times New Roman 12 point type or another font of similar size and appearance. Citations should preferably follow Turabian style, although APA style is also acceptable. Assignments must be submitted electronically by posting on the Sakai site. Hard-copies will not be accepted.
Syllabus Addendum: For other Seminary policies, refer to the attached Syllabus Addendum.

Course Schedule

Weekend One (January 23-24)

- Church Planting: Biblical and Historical Rationales
- Missiological DNA of the Church Plant
- Models of Church Planting
- The Anatomy of a Church Planter
- New Testament Missiology and Church Planting: Part I

Weekend Two (February 20-21)

- Vision and Substance: The Planning Process
- Doing Contextual Analysis
- Deciding Where to Birth a Church
- Building the Ministry Team
- Gestation: Steps to the Launch
- New Testament Missiology and Church Planting: Part II

Weekend Three (March 20-21)

- Launching a Church
- Challenges for the Newborn Congregation
- Group Presentations
- Cultivating Healthy Growth
- Every Church a Church Planting Church
**Syllabus Addendum**

**Academic Standards:** Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

**ADA Policy**
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

**Cancellation of Class**
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

**Extension Policy**
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.
Grades
Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals, who need an official grade report issued to a third party, should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.

Returned Work
Submitted course work will be returned to the student provided s/he provides a self addressed and postage paid envelope with his/her final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed once the grade has been assessed and issued.